

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN

TOD/PeD Toolkit Input Summary

December 8, 2005

Introduction

During the months of September, October, and in early November, meetings with key staff and interested elected officials from each of Marin's jurisdictions and the County of Marin were conducted as part of the outreach effort around the preparation of a TOD/PeD Toolkit as envisioned under the TPLUS Program. This outreach effort was a result of suggestions from the TAM Executive Committee and a meeting with the Marin City Managers group, and was coordinated through the City Manager's Offices of each jurisdiction.

The following is a summary of input provided by the participants in these meetings

The summary is divided into three sections:

1. Marin Specific Issues and Barriers to TOD/PeD;
2. Suggestions for Toolkit Content; and,
3. Policies and Built Examples to Explore for Use in the Toolkit.

Comments and input under each section have been grouped into subsections organized by subject matter. Comments from CD+A and TAM staff are in [square brackets].

1. Marin Specific Issues and Barriers to TOD/PeD

Smart Growth and TOD Development

1. Case for TOD in Marin is weakened or rendered unconvincing by poor existing bus transit service in Marin, and belief that bus service will not improve in the foreseeable future (Fairfax, Tiburon/Belvedere, Mill Valley)
2. Communities consider themselves as (mostly) built out. (Tiburon/Belvedere, Mill Valley, San Anselmo/Ross)
3. Increasingly one or two story buildings are being nominated for listing as landmarks and this may prevent the intensification of land uses even if sites are zoned for higher intensity uses. (San Rafael)
4. Changes to the State density bonus regulations (SB1818) for affordable and senior housing increase the potential for denser housing with less parking without a change in local land use or parking policies. (San Rafael)
5. Residential condominium liability exposure has a detrimental effect on developers to build condominiums, and therefore dense multi-family housing especially given that current market conditions constrain the viability of rental housing. (San Rafael)
6. It is difficult to adequately document for CEQA the benefits of TOD and infill in order to defensibly reduce traffic impacts or parking requirements. (San Rafael)
7. Fairfax's program for amnesty for illegal second units on residential properties allows units to be "grand-fathered in" even if they do not meet parking requirements. This may cause equity problem as new second units need to meet current parking requirements, and these can be difficult to satisfy because of specific site constraints. (Fairfax)

Local Public Opposition to TOD-type Development

General

1. While the public tends to agree with a number of Smart Growth concepts at the General Plan level, this may change when a project becomes more specific and is located in ones neighborhood. (Tiburon)

Density and Design Issues

2. Public opposition to denser development often leads to a reduction in the number of approved units during the public hearings process even for sites already zoned for higher density development. (County)
3. Proposal of high density housing would face community opposition. (Fairfax)
4. Quality of design is a major community concern with regard to infill development projects. Need to further improve the discretionary design review process to address design. (San Rafael, County)
5. While mixed-use and affordable housing projects on Miller Avenue in Mill Valley enjoy relative community support, this is not the case in other locations. (Mill Valley)

TOD-related Transportation Issues

6. Traffic is the most important issue raised by the public around new development. (San Rafael)
7. Need to be able to address concerns over impeded traffic flows and reduced LOS in conjunction with new (denser) development (Corte Madera).
8. Concerns over resource consumption of added development and added traffic due to mismatch between job/housing location (Fairfax)

Transportation Issues

Vehicular Traffic/Roadway Network

1. Many intersections in Marin's towns and cities are uniquely configured (i.e. intersecting streets meet at odd angles). (Corte Madera, Fairfax)
2. Speeding in residential neighborhoods: 80 to 90% of speeding drivers are found to be from neighborhood themselves. (Larkspur)
3. High number of daily vehicular trips per household is an issue for Marin. (Mill Valley)
4. In general, people who live in hilly locations are likely to conduct all of their trips by car, including downtown. (Tiburon)
5. East-west travel to communities west of San Rafael is a major issue as transit to these communities cannot provide significant relief and adding more capacity to alternative routes or constructing new ones meets with community resistance. (San Rafael)
6. School traffic and resulting congestion near school sites is a major issue and speeding on school routes and near schools a frequent occurrence (Larkspur, Corte Madera)

Transit

7. Lack of east-west transit is a major issue. (Corte Madera, Larkspur)

8. Need to understand better how to get people to use shuttles and transit once provided. (Corte Madera)
9. Need better designed transit stops. (Larkspur)
10. Some reorientation of traffic patterns has occurred in Marin and now include more county-internal and northbound commute trips. People are now looking for convenient transit connections within the county and to Sonoma. (Mill Valley)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel and Facilities

11. Crosswalk and pedestrian safety are key issues on major streets. (Corte Madera, San Anselmo, Tiburon/Belvedere)
12. Completion of linkages between existing bicycle routes is important to provide better network for alternative travel. (Larkspur)
13. Highway 101 presents barrier to multi-modal transportation improvements. (Corte Madera)
14. Caltrans ownership of rights-of-way (i.e. Tiburon Boulevard) has hampered local initiatives for the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle improvements. (Tiburon/Belvedere)
15. Requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) can become barrier to completing multi-purpose path linkages through environmentally sensitive areas. (Corte Madera)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Confined Rights-of-Way

16. Difficult to implement bicycle lanes or wider sidewalks in many of Marin's confined rights-of-way. Space needed for the accommodation of utilities and ADA requirements particularly affect the creation of sidewalks on streets that currently don't have any. Many roads have only one parking lane and one travel lane in each direction, which provides little room for tradeoffs if removal of parking is not an option or opposed by residents. This condition leads to conflicts between vehicular and particularly bicycle travel and discourages travel by alternative modes. (Corte Madera, Fairfax, San Anselmo, Mill Valley, Larkspur)
17. Where sidewalks or multi-use paths exist on only one side of a street, this can lead to serious crosswalk safety issues. (Tiburon/Belvedere)

Safe Routes to School

18. Program has become somewhat bureaucratic and should be come more grassroots driven again. (Fairfax)
19. Topography is hampering bicycle and pedestrian access to school sites. (Tiburon)

Alternative Transportation Performance Measures

20. Alternatives to LOS, such as corridor travel time, do not seem viable given current local and regional policies for major roads. (San Rafael)

Alternative Transportation Standards

21. City of San Rafael believes it needs to apply Caltrans highway design standards to major roads within the City to avoid unacceptable liability exposure. However, unified standards between different communities would be of benefit in corridor planning and implementation. (San Rafael)

ADA Related Issues

1. Frivolous lawsuits divert already limited funding and staff resources and prevent a more coordinated approach to ADA improvements targeted to the most frequently used areas. (Larkspur, Corte Madera)
2. ADA requirements do not provide enough flexibility to allow for slight deviations necessitated by local conditions. In many of Marin's hillier locations, ADA slope requirements are difficult or impossible to meet because of confined rights-of-way or slope issues (Corte Madera, Fairfax).
3. Need more choices for selecting attractive, ADA-compliant paving materials in order to be compatible with existing pedestrian improvements. (Larkspur)

Funding and Staff Resources

1. Lack of funding required for implementation multi-modal transportation improvements is a major issue (San Anselmo, Mill Valley, San Rafael)
2. Funding for planning of capital improvements is issue in light of shortage of staff (San Anselmo)

Coordination between Marin's Jurisdictions

1. Public Works Directors (through their PWD Meeting) assign a single project manager to capital improvement projects that involve more than one jurisdiction. Similar coordination is difficult to achieve on a land use planning and project approvals level. (Larkspur)

2. Suggestions for Toolkit Content

General

1. Recommendations need to be relevant to Marin
2. Toolkit needs to be practical and concrete, geared toward assisting overburdened staff.
3. Toolkit should focus on constructively addressing concerns raised by communities.

Smart Growth and TOD Development

1. Consider minimum densities for opportunity sites (County).
2. Existing shopping malls may expand and include mixed-use components: need design ideas on this retrofit process and how to create a more walkable environment (Corte Madera)
3. Look at options that help to address the quality of design, i.e. form-based codes, comprehensive and clear design guidelines, and an improved discretionary review process. (San Rafael)
4. Provide tool about how to design a successful mixed-use building that addresses commonly encountered challenges such as odor, noise, construction cost, and other building code issues. (Larkspur, Tiburon)

Local Public Opposition to Development at TOD-level Densities

1. Focus public's attention on design and not on density aspects of project. (County, San Rafael)
2. Provide case studies and photo examples and/or PowerPoint slides of successful residential and mixed-use development for the use in public meetings. Need to be applicable to scale of place where development is proposed. (Larkspur, Tiburon/Belvedere, County, Fairfax)
3. Provide public with a countywide development framework that addresses concerns for an incremental deterioration of Quality of Life. (County)
4. Educate public about tradeoffs between development near transit and the preservation of greenfield and environmentally sensitive sites. (County)
5. Suggest "upfront" input from the public as recommendation for development review process. (San Rafael)
6. Provide education about trip generation and LOS of TOD. (Corte Madera)

Parking

1. Address how on-street parking can be responsibly reduced in order to create space for alternative modes (i.e. bicycles). (Fairfax)
2. Interest in definition of new parking standards for commercial development in mixed-use, downtown, or transit-oriented situations. (San Rafael)

3. Definition of “right” balance between space stall dimension and average size of autos and SUVs. (San Rafael)
4. Provide a tool that addresses vehicular and bicycle parking needs at transit stops. (San Anselmo)
5. Provide parking standards and alternative parking policies that have proven successful in places similar to those in Marin. (Tiburon)

Multi-modal Street Improvements

Travel Behavior

1. Look at “Get Smart Program” by the City of San Jose, a campaign directed at changing driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior. (Fairfax)
2. Identify which amenities encourage walking as travel mode and how they can be implemented. (Tiburon)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

3. Revise Tool T-B8 to fit better with Marin’s conditions (few intersections in Marin look like the one depicted) (Corte Madera)
4. Pedestrian Planning Advisory Committee could give similar boost to pedestrian related planning efforts as Bicycle Planning Advisory Committee has for bicycle matters. (San Anselmo)
5. Address best practices (i.e. width standards) for multi-use paths. (Tiburon/Belvedere)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in confined Rights-of-Way

6. Provide tool on how to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian improvements in limited rights-of-way
7. Need tool that addresses how to get bicycles through uniquely configured intersections (of which there are many in Marin). (Fairfax)
8. Ross has been successful in applying “fogline” as tool to provide space for bicyclists where full bike lanes were not feasible.

Roundabouts

9. Provide tool that addresses the design of different types of roundabouts. (Larkspur)

Transit

10. Include tools about Safe Routes to Transit. (Fairfax)
11. Providing exciting transit options may convince people to use transit (i.e. trolley line on Sir Francis Drake). (Fairfax)

Safe Routes to School

12. Wendi Kallins can provide additional input on reference and resource list for Safe Routes to School section of toolkit. (Fairfax)
13. Look into car pooling as one of several measures to reduce the number of vehicular school trips. Some schools achieve this by discouraging single parent/single student drop off at the most convenient drop off locations. (Larkspur)

14. Educate high school students and their parents about alternative modes of transportation (i.e. bicycling) to head off view that getting drivers license and driving to school is only option. (Larkspur)

Traffic Calming

15. Include toolkit section and educational material about traffic speed and successful traffic calming measures for residential neighborhoods. (Larkspur)

3. Policies and Built Examples to Explore for Use in the Toolkit

Policies

1. County is working on Housing Overlay that will allow the transfer of units allocated to sites in environmentally sensitive areas to sites near transit.
2. County is considering adding housing to existing shopping centers (Marin Wood, Tam Junction, Marin City, and Strawberry Canyon)
3. Fairfax is planning on using a zoning overlay for its downtown to identify opportunity sites for mixed-use development and infill housing.
4. Mill Valley has and Fairfax is planning on conducting an amnesty on illegal second units to increase the (legally) available number of units on the housing market.
5. Public Works Directors (through their PWD Meeting) assign a single project manager to capital improvement projects that involve more than one jurisdiction.
6. Mixed-use and affordable housing projects proposed for sites along Miller Avenue in Mill Valley are the result of the (as of yet unapproved) Miller Avenue Precise Plan and the political will of the City Council to generate affordable housing.
7. Safe Routes to School Program in Mill Valley has greatly contributed to reducing the number of vehicular school trips.
8. Bicycle Planning Advisory Committee has given great boost to bicycle related planning (Fairfax, San Anselmo)

Built Examples

1. **Downtown Novato:**
 - a) Grand Avenue,
 - b) Row Ranch,
 - c) Whole Foods;
2. **San Rafael:**
 - a) Rotary Senior Building,
 - b) Senior Housing development behind Whole Foods (same as above?)
3. **Corte Madera:** Aegis project on Pacific Drive;
4. **Larkspur:**
 - a) Creekside development on Magnolia Avenue (beyond Doherty Drive),
 - b) Mixed-use project in Larkspur Landing (by Campus Development);
5. **Mill Valley:** Mixed-use project next to Whole Foods;
6. **San Anselmo:**
 - a) Mixed-use project on Mariposa Avenue,

- b) Project on Butterfield Road (example of ped/bike improvements in a confined right-of-way);
- 7. Explore usefulness of examples built in Berkeley using the state density bonus program;
- 8. Use Marin's downtowns as positive examples for walkability and livability;

Ideas and Concepts

- 1. ADA: Create an Accessibility Advisory Commission to help prioritize ADA related improvements (Corte Madera).
- 2. Transit:
 - a) Corte Madera formed informal partnership with Larkspur to explore possibility of an east-west transit shuttle focused on the needs of school kids and seniors.
 - b) A feeder bus system could further increase the success of the ferry out of Tiburon.
- 3. Toolkit Application: The toolkit could be specifically be useful for the preparation of the Transportation Element (Mill Valley); the update of the Zoning Ordinance, future specific plans (Corte Madera); Downtown Plan (Tiburon).